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Currents | Michael McDonough

Maybe it's the recession and the lack of toothsome commissions. Or the absence of a compelling new theory since deconstruction. Whatever the case, architects and designers seem to be getting comfortable with history again. Examples of "new but old" style — contemporary with a retro twist — abound. What might be mistaken for a look backward could be the beginning of something new.

Where Bauhaus and Richard Serra Intersect



Edward Huerber

WHAT do you get when you have a client who is a student of philosophy and an aspiring writer with a generous attitude toward experimental architecture? "My only directive was to separate a library from a residence," said Simon Ungers, who with his partner, Tom Kinslow, created the T-House in Wilton, N.Y., for Lawrence Marcelle. "Beyond that, I had total freedom."

What that freedom wrought was a monastic one-bedroom residence topped by a precariously balanced

library that can hold up to 10,000 books. The whole structure was shoehorned into less than 2,300 square feet. Gracing the cover of *Architectural Record's* annual compilation of noteworthy residences, the house has the nearly surreal quality of something unearthed from a Bauhaus archive crossed with one of those dangerous-looking Richard Serra sculptures. Although the library has a remarkable system of catwalks and suspended shelves, the bedroom is compact enough to warrant a Murphy bed.

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